

Your studies

**Department of
Literature, Film,
and Theatre
Studies**

Postgraduate research

STUDENT HANDBOOK
2020-21



University of Essex

Welcome

Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/lifts/>



Welcome to the Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies (LiFtS). We hope that you will enjoy your time at Essex and that you will find your studies with us challenging, inspiring and rewarding. As a member of our postgraduate community you will be part of a dynamic research culture in an interdisciplinary department. Our expertise stretches across literature, creative writing, film studies and production, drama, and journalism. You will be supervised by leading academics in their fields as well as experienced practitioners of international standing.

You are joining the University during extraordinary circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented huge challenges and difficulties for everyone. But you have shown immense grit, courage and determination in getting this far. We have taken every possible step to make sure you will have a successful, interesting—and also safe!—academic year in 2020-21, and that your studies will continue uninterrupted, whatever the next twelve months may bring. We will work together as a Department, and as a community, and we know that you have a fantastic university journey ahead of you, with many creative and intellectual adventures in store—and we are all here to guide and support you every step of the way.

We have a worldwide reputation for the quality of our research and teaching, with excellent postgraduate prospects. The Department is an exciting and stimulating environment for our postgraduate students, offering plenty of opportunities to engage with your research interests, alongside your formal academic studies, in a variety of ways, including readings, book launches, poetry competitions, Departmental seminars with guest speakers, student conferences, performances in the Lakeside Theatre, screenings and much more. We warmly encourage you to explore and take these opportunities as appropriate to complement your research.

On behalf of the Department, we wish you a wonderful journey as a postgraduate researcher at Essex.

Professor Elizabeth Kuti

Head of Department

Contents

Welcome	i
Introduction.....	6
Practicalities and Getting Started.....	7
Right to Study.....	7
Student visas.....	7
Explore your Campus.....	7
Get connected.....	8
Working while studying	9
Your personal belongings	9
The Essex Experience	10
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	10
Student communities.....	10
Essex Sport.....	10
Students' Union.....	11
Essex Spirit, social media and What's on?	11
About the Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies	12
Meet the team	12
Administrative staff and responsibilities	12
Academic staff and responsibilities.....	13
Your supervisor	13
Staff research interests	14
Support within the Department	14
Funding your research	15
Proficio	15
Departmental resources and facilities.....	15
Communication	17
Departmental Open Seminars	18
In Progress... ..	18
PhD Conference.....	19

Learning and Teaching	20
The nature of doctoral studies	20
Completing on time	20
Timetable of study	21
Department PhD Milestones 2020-21	22
Department PhD Milestones prior to 2020-21	22
Student Staff Partnership and Supervisor Responsibilities	22
Postgraduate Researcher Responsibilities	24
The academic year	26
Periods of study	26
PhD, MPhil and MA by Dissertation submission requirements.....	26
Supervisory Panels	28
The Supervisory Panel and responsibilities	28
Supervisory Panel members	28
Supervisory panel reports: progression and criteria	29
Confirmation of PhD status	31
Supervisory panel arrangements	32
Timeline of the Supervisory Panel	32
Submission of work to the Supervisory Panel.....	33
Deadlines to submit work to the Supervisory Panel	33
Extenuating Circumstances	34
Research Students' Progress Boards (RSPB).....	35
Graduate Teaching Assistant opportunities	36
Submission of thesis/dissertation.....	37
Notice of Intention to Submit (Approval of Thesis Title form)	37
Format of the thesis/dissertation.....	37
Submitting the thesis/dissertation for examination	37
Submitting the thesis/dissertation to the Repository	38
Thesis/dissertation embargos	38
The Viva Voce Examination	38
Requirements for the Award	38

Viva voce examination membership and arrangements	39
Examiners' recommendations	39
Publication of viva result	41
Appeals	41
Making changes to your study	41
Library Services	42
Assessment and Academic Integrity	43
Ethics in research.....	43
Risk assessments in research	43
Academic Integrity and Academic Offences	44
Referencing	44
Academic Skills and Support	44
Language classes English classes for dependants	45
Learning a Language	45
Student Voice	47
Student Representatives	47
PGR Course Representatives.....	47
Student Voice Groups	47
Student Surveys	47
You Matter	48
Student Services Hub	48
Support for disabilities and conditions	48
Seeing a Doctor	48
Counselling services	49
UK Immigration Advice and Guidance	49
Money management	49
Students' Union Advice	49
Residence Life	49
Religion, faith and beliefs	49
Harassment support.....	50
COVID-19 (Coronavirus).....	50

Health and safety on campus.....	50
Making a Complaint	50
Student Development.....	52
Careers Services.....	52
CareerHub.....	52
Big Essex Award	52
Volunteering	52
Essex Interns	52
You Are Essex	53
Your Award Certificate	53
Graduation.....	53
GradIntelligence	53
References.....	53
Alumni	54
What comes next?	54
Appendix	55
Departmental Style Guide	55

Introduction

All Schools and Departments at Essex create a Student Handbook each year. These are designed to be useful tools for you to find out what you need to know about your department, the University and its academic policies and procedures, and all the resources available to you.

We know things might be a little different this year, but we remain absolutely determined to provide you with the best Essex education and student experience we can while safeguarding your health and wellbeing. Make sure that you keep up to date with what we all need to do to [keep safe as a community](#).

At Essex we celebrate diversity and challenge inequality. You are welcomed to a truly diverse community where differences are celebrated, and individuality is valued. Your contribution is welcomed and encouraged based on your own thoughts and experiences. As part of our community you will have the freedom to explore, experiment, challenge your discipline and have your ideas shaped by peer and professional knowledge from all over the world. Essex is about more than just getting a degree: we have so much to offer our students!

Things might have to change and adapt over the year, so make sure that you're checking online and keeping in touch with your department for the latest updates. The [Student Directory](#) contains a wealth of other helpful sources of information which you may also find useful.

While the information contained in this Handbook (compiled in August 2020) is believed to be correct at the time of printing, the Department reserves the right to update, modify or even withdraw specific courses or to change staffing arrangements or assessment procedures where academic developments or unexpected contingencies render such action necessary or expedient in the judgement of the Head of Department. If there are any discrepancies between this document and official University documents, then the University's documents take precedence.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are aware of the contents of this Handbook and of the University and Department procedures and regulations set out or referenced in this Handbook.

Practicalities and Getting Started

You've made it to Essex! We've outlined below the most important things you need to make sure you do as soon as possible to get your time at Essex started.

Registration

Whether a new or returning student, you will need to officially register at the start of each academic year. Registration is not only a formal procedure of enrolling you into the University, but also connects you to a number of vital systems which allow you to access your online Welcome and Induction information and start your studies. As part of this process, you will need to activate your Essex IT account, register online and, once you arrive on campus, undertake a Right to Study check and collect your student registration card.

Right to Study

The University must ensure all students have the right to study at the University of Essex for the whole duration of their course. If you require [immigration permission](#) to study in the UK, this will be checked when you first register on your course and as necessary thereafter. Students have a duty to maintain valid UK immigration permission that allows study for the duration of their course, failure to do so may lead to withdrawal from the University under the [University's General Regulations](#).

Student visas

The University has [many duties](#) as a Tier 4 sponsor and must ensure we remain compliant in order to retain our Tier 4 sponsor status. Students with a Tier 4 or Short-term student visa have responsibilities to the University and the Home Office. There will be conditions attached to your visa that restrict what you can do in the UK, breaking any of the conditions may mean you can't remain in the UK and complete your course. Please be aware that changes to your course, whether due to academic failure or choice, must be considered against the Immigration rules and guidance in place at the time, and this can mean that some academic options may not be available to you.

If you are coming to the UK on or after 1 January 2021 to study, you may be applying for a visa under the new immigration rules that the UK government intend to introduce. These rules will also apply to European and Swiss nationals who do not already have EU settled status or UK immigration permission. The government aim to release the new rules in the autumn of 2020, we'll publish more information on our [immigration web pages](#) after they have been published and considered.

Explore your Campus

There is a broad range of [facilities](#) across each of our campuses to support your experience at Essex, whether in person or virtually. For the latest information, see the updates on [services on campus](#) and make sure that you're aware of the [guidance](#) for those coming onto campus.

Get connected

Your IT account

You will need to activate [your Essex IT account](#). Once you're set up, you can access your Essex email, log in to Moodle, access lab computers and library services, print for free on campus, connect to campus wi-fi, and much more. When you activate your account, you should register an external e-mail address and passphrase so that if you [forget your password](#), you can also reset it using these details. If you have forgotten those also, you should either visit the IT Helpdesk or call 01206 872345. Make sure you keep your password safe and do not share it with others!

Campus Wi-fi

If you are studying on any of our campuses, connect to our Wi-Fi by simply finding the 'eduroam' network on your device and use the same log in details as your IT account to connect up!

Essex Apps

The University has a variety of online systems and platforms designed to enhance your learning and help make processes easier. We have rounded up the top platforms, portals and apps that you need to know about!

MyEssex

[MyEssex](#) is your online account. This is different to your applicant portal – you can use MyEssex to update your personal details, request replacement student cards or supporting documents, monitor your course progress, contact the Student Services Hub, and much more.

PocketEssex

[Pocket Essex](#) is the University's official app for students; its interface of icons act as a portal through to a variety of areas and resources. PocketEssex links to many areas that MyEssex does, but also takes you through to other key resources, such as the Students' Union, FindYourWay and the Library.

Find Your Way

When on campus, we know that finding your way can be challenging to start with. Our Colchester campus in particular can be difficult to navigate with a historically complex room numbering system! [FindYourWay](#) is our interactive campus map designed to get you from A to B on either the Colchester or Southend campuses with quick and easy directions.

Zoom

Zoom is the principal delivery mechanism used by the University for online meetings, presenting, teaching and training. This [quick start guide](#) gives you an introduction to the essentials of joining and participating in a Zoom webinar or meeting.

Working while studying

Many students choose to work part-time to supplement their income. Working during your course can also give you excellent skills and experience to boost your CV. Our [Student Services Hub](#) can help you find part-time work. There are also many opportunities to [work in paid jobs on campus](#).

You can access recommendations on working hours, as well as guidance on rates of pay and National Insurance contributions on the [Careers Services webpages](#).

If you have a student visa, please read our information on [working in the UK for international students](#) before you start looking for a job. The country you're from and your visa type will determine whether or not you can work in the UK. If you can work, the type of work you are allowed to undertake and the number of hours you can work will be restricted.

Your personal belongings

The University does not cover costs for personal damage or loss of possessions; only in instances where the University has been negligent would a claim be viable for compensation for personal belongings. Therefore, you are strongly advised to take out personal insurance cover for your possessions. This is especially important for valuable items, such as laptops, phones and tablets.

The Essex Experience

The University of Essex is proud of its inclusivity and its international community. Our campuses and our University are places that are welcoming, where every single person can feel they have a place where they belong and where you can find the world in one place. As part of our ongoing commitment we have created a [Student Charter](#) as a pledge that every student becomes a part of when they join us. With the Student Charter you agree to support our community and we promise to provide you with a transformational educational experience.

Embrace the Essex Values

We are different at Essex. We are brave, we are bold, and we embrace challenges and drive change. Our values are underpinned by this very culture. While we full heartedly encourage students to challenge the status quo and explore the unknown, we expect that students do so respectfully, intelligently and act as true ambassadors for the University. The University has a [Code of Student Conduct](#) that outlines the rules and regulations that help us maintain our high standards of behaviour.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The University recognises the value of diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity within the University. It therefore aims to create the conditions whereby students and staff are treated with dignity and respect, and solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of race, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religious or political beliefs and affiliations, or any other irrelevant distinction.

The University is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this [policy](#) is fully effective.

Student communities

We pride ourselves on being a welcoming and inclusive student community. The University recognises the value of diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity within the University.

We offer a wide range of support to individuals and [groups of student members](#), such as our [postgraduate students](#) – our student communities - who may have specific requirements, interests or responsibilities - to help fulfil your potential. Whether you are an international student, a mature student, a BAME student or have any other requirements or needs, we here at Essex want to welcome you with open arms. The University is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this [policy](#) is fully effective.

Essex Sport

Learning doesn't just happen in the classroom. Keeping active during your studies is a great way to meet new people, help relieve stress, maintain good physical and mental wellbeing, increase productivity, and improve your employability.

Visit the [Essex Sport](#) website or [download the app](#) to discover all the ways you can keep active during your time at Essex. In order to ensure the welfare of our community there may be changes to opening hours or what's available, so do check on the website for the latest information.

Students' Union

We're famous for our [Students' Union at Essex](#), and for good reason. Here you're not just a member of a normal Students' Union; you're part of a family. We work hard to support our PGR community, and are here from day one of your research, to the moment you graduate to support you in any way we can.

The Students' Union is run by students for students, and you have the ability to shape what we do. From deciding who leads the SU by electing our entire Student Leadership team including the PGR Officer, to shaping your own experiences at Essex, we are here to represent your views and work with you to make amazing things happen.

Get involved!

There are opportunities to join 45 [Sports Clubs](#), to get involved with our [BUCS teams](#) which offer the opportunity to play competitively in a wide range of sports across the year. If you just want to try a sport, don't want to commit to a regular team, or would rather not play competitively, check out our [Just Play](#) programme.

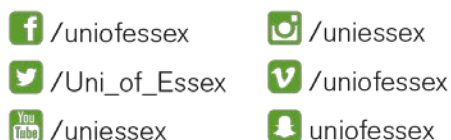
We have [120 Societies](#) where you can meet people with similar interests, challenge yourself with something new or, if you can't find what you're looking for, [start your own!](#)

We also have our very own letting agency [SU Homes](#) designed to offer help and support for students to find off campus accommodation.

Essex Spirit, social media and What's on?

Keep up to date with important news, events and offers from across the University with our Essex Spirit newsletter, delivered directly to your Essex email address.

Follow us on social media:



Our [Events calendar](#) brings together all the events happening across our three campuses, so you can make the most of your time at Essex.

About the Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies

Meet the team

A full list of all academic and professional services staff for the **Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies** can be found on our [website](#).

Below is a summary of the roles of staff that you are likely to be in contact with most frequently.

Administrative staff and responsibilities

Role	Name	Contact details	Responsibilities
Department Manager	Dr Daniela Wachsening	Office: 5NW.6.12 Email: d.wachsening@essex.ac.uk Phone: 01206 872604	Responsible for the overall administration of the Department
Deputy Department Manager	Rachele Winn	Office: 5NW.6.14 Email: rachele@essex.ac.uk Phone: 01206 872611	Responsible for student administrative and pastoral issues (undergraduate students)
Senior Student Administrator	Deanna McCarthy	Office: 5NW.6.16 Email: dlmcca@essex.ac.uk Phone: 01206 872176	Responsible for all general administrative matters for postgraduate taught (MA) and doctoral research (PhD) students
Student and Academic Services Administrator	Emma Harvey	Office: 5NW.6.16 Email: eh16322@essex.ac.uk Phone: 01206 873282	Responsible for all general academic and non-academic matters for all students in the Department
Student and Academic Services Administrator	Hannah Langwith	Office: 5NW.6.16 Email: hlang@essex.ac.uk Phone: 01206 872624	Responsible for all general academic and non-academic matters for all students in the Department
Student and Academic Services Administrator	Lisa Lewis	Office: 5NW.6.16 Email: lisa.lewis@essex.ac.uk Phone: 01206 872417	Responsible for all general academic and non-academic matters for all students in the Department

For any postgraduate queries, please contact our postgraduate inbox liftspg@essex.ac.uk in the first instance.

For any other general queries, please contact the General Office on liftstt@essex.ac.uk, tel. 01206 872626 or visit room 5NW.6.16

Academic staff and responsibilities

Role	Name	Contact details	Responsibilities
Head of Department	Professor Elizabeth Kuti	Office: 5NW.6.13 Email: ejkuti@essex.ac.uk Phone: 01206 873408	Responsible for leading and managing the Department and for the Department's overall academic provision
Director of Graduate Studies	Dr Daniel O'Brien	Office: 5NW.5.7 Email: d.obrien@essex.ac.uk Phone: 01206 872625	Responsible for PGR admissions, overseeing the postgraduate activities in the Department and for your general academic well-being
Director of Research and CADENZA Co-ordinator	Professor Katharine Cockin	Office: 5NW.4.5 Email: k.m.cockin@essex.ac.uk Phone: 01206 876332	Responsible for any research matters and for the strategic development of the Department's research activity Responsible for the CADENZA co-ordination for Graduate Teaching Assistants in the Department
Employability Director	Dr James Canton	Office: 5NW.4.4 Email: jcanto@essex.ac.uk Phone: 01206 872446	Responsible for the development and enhancement of employability provision for the Department
Ethics Officer	Professor Karin Littau	Office: 5NW.5.13 Email: klittau@essex.ac.uk Phone: 01206 872629	Responsible for all matters relating to research ethics in the Department, including ethical approval of research projects involving human participants
Postgraduate Research Student Representative	Jack Rutherford	Please email liftpg@essex.ac.uk in the first instance and your email will be redirected as appropriate	Responsible for the representation of PGR students on department and University committee meetings

Your supervisor

A supervisor or co-supervisors will have been appointed for you during the admissions process. You are expected to have regular contact with your supervisor/s during your studies and they should be the first port of call for any concerns/problems.

Supervision of research students during periods of leave

Academic staff serving as supervisors of postgraduate research students will, on occasion, take periods of research leave for research purposes. During some periods of research leave, supervisors may not be in residence at the University. It is incumbent upon the supervisor, with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, to develop a plan for the continuing supervision of students during periods of research leave. In making such arrangements, it is the policy of the department that:

- a) Members of staff are expected to continue to carry out their role as supervisor during periods of research leave.
- b) Members of staff on research leave are not expected to attend Supervisory Panels but are expected to provide a written assessment of progress.
- c) Members of staff on research leave should make arrangements for continuing contact with their supervisees, whether through face-to-face meetings, or through some form of remote communication.
- d) In cases where a member of staff plans to be out-of-residence for an extended period during their research leave, an alternate member of staff should be named (by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the supervisor) as a local contact for the supervisee student. The local contact is not meant to act as a substitute supervisor (see point (A) above) but to serve as a designated point of contact in the Department during the period when the supervisor is out-of-residence.

Staff research interests

Our research is at the heart of our activities and feeds directly into our teaching. We follow a distinctly comparative approach through critical and creative work in literature, drama, film, creative writing, and journalism that extends across genres and media forms. You can therefore expect the research interests of staff and students to be extremely diverse. We think this diversity is something for you to value and utilise, whatever the particular field of your own research.

We have internationally recognised expertise in world literatures and theatres, and our work covers areas from Shakespeare and transatlantic romanticism to global modernism, women's suffrage literature, science fiction, dystopias, and postcolonial literature. In film studies, our strengths are world cinema, film theory and practice, adaptation and documentary filmmaking. We are proud to have foremost scholars and practitioners of contemporary theatre and poetry among the members of our staff, and we have a rising profile in journalism studies.

For more information visit our [Research pages](#).

Our academic staff are the authors of numerous major [publications](#).

See our [academic staff profiles](#) for full lists of individual research.

Support within the Department

Any problems you may have should be discussed with your supervisor, but the Director of Graduate Studies is also happy to advise you on research related matters or matters relating to the University's formal requirements. Should you at any stage feel dissatisfied with the treatment you are receiving from your supervisor, you should raise the matter with the Director of Graduate Studies, who is always prepared to discuss any issues in the strictest confidence.

If your supervisor happens to be the Director of Graduate Studies, you should approach the Head of Department. If you feel unable to approach a member of the Department, you may contact the Deputy Dean of Postgraduate Research Education (Faculty of Humanities), [Professor David O'Mahony](#).

Funding your research

Proficio

Substantial support for your professional training and research expenses is provided by [Proficio](#).

Proficio is our innovative professional development scheme for postgraduate research students, unique to Essex. Proficio is designed to provide you with the resources to maintain the highest levels of research skills, plan your research degree effectively and tackle problems common to researchers. Proficio courses will offer you the opportunity to develop skills and articulate them to either academic or non-academic employers confidently and effectively. They also enable you to network with other postgraduate research students.

As a postgraduate research student you are automatically registered on the Proficio system and, once you have completed the **Training Needs Analysis** on Moodle, can use your University of Essex password and username to [book courses](#) and to check your funding.

Departmental resources and facilities

A wide range of facilities and resources are available for all students to access and use as part of their study at Essex. Each department and school also have a selection for the exclusive use of their students.

Below is a summary of the facilities and resources that are likely to be most useful to you.

Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies General Office

The General Office is located on floor 6 in 5NW.6.16 (take the entrance next to Santander on Square 4 and follow the signs).

While we are working from home during COVID-19, just email us at liftstt@essex.ac.uk for a date and time, and we will be very happy to talk to you via Zoom or on the phone. Our (virtual) General Office is open from **10.00 am to 12.00 pm** and from **2.00 pm to 4.00 pm** Monday to Friday.

Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies Common Room and Kitchen

As soon as we are able to return to campus of all activities, you are warmly invited to use our Department's Common Room (5NW.6.1) and adjoining kitchen, both of which have tea/coffee making facilities and are open from Monday-Friday 9.00am-5.00pm.

Postgraduate Study Rooms

A Postgraduate Study Room (5NW.5.15) and two PhD Study Rooms (5NW.5.12 and 5NW.5.14) with networked computers, desk space and shelves is available for research students' use. During the University's sustained protection measures as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, access to the Postgraduate (PG) study room is strictly limited and must be booked in advance and in accordance

with social distancing requirements. This may mean that you will not necessarily be guaranteed access to the room. Please contact liftstt@essex.ac.uk, stating your name, course and the times you wish to book a desk in the PG study room. Please ensure that you provide at least **10 working days'** notice.

As these rooms are shared by many people, we ask that students please fully vacate any desks at the end of each visit and PCs are made available for others to use as required.

For health and safety reasons, we **cannot** allow the storage of any food items in the Study Room.

We strongly advise that you **do not** leave valuables in the room.

You can sign out a key for the Postgraduate Study Room from the General Office (when staff return to the office) on a termly basis or for the length of the academic year. A nominal deposit of £5.00 is required when signing out any keys which will be reimbursed when the keys are returned.

Printing, photocopying and scanning

All students can [print, copy and scan for free at Essex!](#) You can even [print from your mobile](#) by sending your attachment to mobileprinting@essex.ac.uk.

Once you've located a device, simply log in using your Essex login and password, or tap with your student card to print. Whilst printing is free for all students, please think of your carbon footprint and only print if necessary.

Please note that there are strict laws about infringement of [copyright](#); more information can be found on the [library website](#) which explains what and how much you are permitted to copy. Usage is monitored and subject to a fair use policy.

Premium printing

Premium services for printing and finishing, including binding your documents for presentational purposes, are available at The Copy Centre (Square 4, Colchester Campus). These services are chargeable.

Noticeboards

Every department and school has their own noticeboard(s) providing information on staff, courses and classes, updates, careers, events and opportunities. Various information is displayed around the Department's noticeboards on floors 4, 5 and 6. The Graduate noticeboard is on level 6 near the General Office. The Department's 'virtual' noticeboard will be via Moodle.

Film Library

Our Departmental Film Library has a vast collection of movies and documentaries. Once business as usual on campus resumes, students are welcome to borrow DVDs for up to two days at no cost from the General Office. The film library is catalogued electronically and searchable [via the Department website](#).

Communication

It is important to keep up to date with information relating to the department and course. This section also summarises how the department will communicate updates with you and provides some guidance on communicating with University staff.

The University's policy is to use e-mail for routine communication between staff and students. Your Essex e-mail address will have been added to the relevant e-mail groups specific to your department, course and modules to ensure that you receive the essential information, updates and general communication related to your study and issues that may affect you. It is therefore vital that you check your Essex email **regularly**. It is recommended that you check your Essex email **each day** to ensure you do not miss any important updates to classes and assessment.

You must use your Essex email rather than your personal email to engage with the Department.

If you are elected to a Student Representative position or volunteer in another form or means, it is even more important to regularly check your Essex email as should other students and staff need to get in touch, they will do so via your Essex email.

You will also automatically be subscribed to a small number of opt-out lists, again, based on your course. These will be used to send useful information and, while some of this may be about events, marketing or other opportunities, we try to avoid sending too much. You are able to [opt in or out of such lists](#).

Our website

Each department and school has its own section of the University website. This is an important source of information and news about all aspects of your studies. You can find the **Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies** website [here](#).

By telephone

You will only be contacted via phone in emergencies, or when it is otherwise necessary to receive an immediate response, but you should ensure that you provide the University with a contact number with your personal details.

By text message

In instances where a last-minute change has been made, and the department needs to communicate this with short notice, you may receive a text message to communicate the change, such as a cancellation of a supervisory panel meeting due to unforeseen circumstances. You should ensure that you provide the University with a contact number with your personal details.

By letter

Letters (such as your award letter) may be attached to your Essex email and/or posted to your term-time address, so please make sure the University has your current contact details. Your address and contact details can be updated via the [MyEssex](#) portal.

Social Media

You are very much encouraged to visit, like or follow, and interact with our departmental [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages which are frequently updated with a range of news, information, reflections, anecdotes, and events taking place in and around the Department and the University. These pages contain a mix of informative, thoughtful and light-hearted entries and showcase our diversity, vibrancy and accomplishments at all levels of study and research. They are a good way of keeping in touch with what is going on in the Department and at the University as a whole.

Additionally, the Department has its own [blog](#) which features contributions from both staff and students. Postgraduate students are invited to become bloggers and use the site as an alternative outlet to share their creative work, advice and experiences. Please contact the [General Office](#) if you are interested in writing for the blog.

Departmental Open Seminars

Throughout the academic year, our Department will host a series of Open Seminars and talks either on campus or remotely, centred around our various Department disciplines. These seminars and talks bring together leading external scholars, academic staff and postgraduate students in the Department, to discuss new research or work in progress. The seminars are also an opportunity for our postgraduate researchers to present key concepts of their theses. You are warmly encouraged to attend these events which will be useful to the development of your studies and allow you to gain new perspectives on current research.

The seminars are co-ordinated by [Dr Holly Pester](#).

Seminars are advertised in advance via your Essex email, the [Department's webpage](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, and, if possible, on the Graduate noticeboard and in the Common Room on level 6.

In Progress...

During the Autumn and Spring terms, our postgraduate researchers organise a work and social get-together (either on campus or remotely) entitled *In Progress*. The format of these evenings is for one student to present on their research, followed by a Q&A session. This is a great opportunity for the student presenting their work to get peer feedback, for our research students to hear the amazing array of research going on in the Department, and for everyone to get to know each other better. Postgraduate taught students are also invited to contribute with their own talks in the Spring term and the sessions are open to all.

If you would like more information, please contact liftspg@essex.ac.uk

PhD Conference

A PhD conference - organised by and for doctoral researchers in the Department - is normally held every year, usually in May/June. This is an exciting opportunity for you to join doctoral researchers, academic staff and other students in the Department to present your research materials and share your ideas. There may also be an opportunity for your papers to be published. We also always encourage and look forward to your contribution to the Department's blog, writing about your experience organising and/or presenting at the Conference, or sharing your reflections on some of the proceedings.

It may also be possible to combine the MA Conference with the PhD Conference if this would be more suitable.

The Department has a budget allowance available for the organisation of the PhD conference. The budget for the agreed outline of the event is overseen by the [Director of Graduate Studies](#) and the [Department Manager](#). If you would like to be involved with organising the event, please bring a proposed outline of the conference to the [Senior Student Administrator](#) for an initial discussion

Learning and Teaching

The University is committed to providing equal opportunities for all our students regardless of where or how you study. Our diverse student population is taken into account when developing the resources, services and facilities on and off campus, when we create our courses, write publications and course materials, and set our policies and regulations.

The nature of doctoral studies

From the first day of your research, plan your work so that you can realistically expect to submit your thesis for examination within your standard period. While doctoral projects need to be both comprehensive and original, for any research project, it is wise to limit the scale and scope of what you do to what you can achieve in a set period of time. To work within limits allowed by the time available is part of the exercise of research itself.

A decision to pursue research implies that you are keenly motivated and interested in your chosen subject, and you have already started examining your primary sources. The opening phase of research can be bewildering unless you devise a clear strategy from the outset. This includes the working out of a general plan of research, the initial conceptualisation of the problems likely to arise, and a preliminary review of the most relevant literature. As you move further into the subject, you may well find that the plan changes and that the problems turn out to be somewhat different from those you had initially foreseen. But after three months' work, it should be possible for you to have a very clear idea of what you are aiming for, and by this stage you should be conversant with secondary sources and examining your primary sources in depth. Your major effort at investigating these and drafting your chapters will probably come between the end of your first term and the midpoint of your third year. This leaves the second half of your third year for revising the thesis into its final version.

Completing on time

Your original research proposal should have been feasible and realistic with regard to your project aims, output and proposed timeline. If you stick to this timeline and meet all the milestones relevant for each stage of your study, you should be in a position to submit your thesis within **three years** (six years for part-time students).

MA by Dissertation students should be in a position to submit within **one year** (two years for part-time students) and MPhil students within **two years** (four years for part-time students). It is important to remember that, if you are a recipient of a scholarship for PhD studies, your funding will normally only be awarded for three years and will not cover any applicable completion period.

Sometimes unforeseen circumstances (such as illness, personal circumstances etc.) do cause delays in submission. However, there are often common problems which can be avoided:

- **Lack of planning and research** in the early stages/first year of study. You should use the feedback from your meetings with your supervisor and your Supervisory Panels in order to focus your work and agree realistic aims to meet throughout your study.
- **Poor record-keeping.** You should make sure your notes from all stages of your research are organised, indexed and referenced correctly and clearly.
- **Over-perfectionism.** You need to recognise the point at which to move on to your next stage of study/research rather than continually seek to polish and perfect the work you have already done (particularly in the writing up stage).
- **Demands on your time.** Sometimes it is necessary for students to undertake paid part-time/freelance work to support their studies. Teaching experience can be very valuable but financial and other benefits need to be weighed against the impact on your research time. Remember that full-time postgraduate research students are students for twelve months of the year.

Timetable of study

A typical timetable for PhD study would look like this:

First year (first term of your research)	Planning, conceptualisation, reading, writing a critical review of the secondary literature in your field (or creative practice equivalent as established in the milestones), establishing your position regarding it, and identifying the sources you intend to use. You should keep a critical bibliography of the material you are reading.
First year (second term of your research)	You should now be working on the primary materials of your thesis, writing draft chapters as soon as possible.
	At the end of your first year (end of second year for part-timers) your second supervisory panel will be the Confirmation of PhD Status panel. The Panel will review the evidence to confirm whether your progress and work is at PhD level.
Second year	The process of investigation and writing continues.
	At the end of the second year for part-timers the supervisory panel in summer will be the Confirmation Panel. The Panel will review the evidence to confirm whether your progress and work is at PhD level.
Third year (first term)	The completion of draft chapters.

Third year (second term)	Revision of your thesis into a final version ready for submission, inclusive of the notes, bibliography and an abstract.
------------------------------------	--

This is a broad description of a typical pattern of progression from first to third year of the thesis.

Department PhD Milestones 2020-21

The PhD, MPhil and MA by Dissertation **2020-21** Milestones can be found [here](#).

Department PhD Milestones prior to 2020-21

PhD Milestones for students who started their studies before 2019/20 can be found on Moodle:

- Students who began their studies in **2015/16** can find the PhD Milestones [here](#).
- Students who began their studies in **2016/17** can find the PhD Milestones [here](#).
- Students who began their studies in **2017/18** can find the PhD Milestones [here](#).
- Students who began their studies in **2018/19** can find the PhD Milestones [here](#).
- Students who began their studies in **2019/20** can find the PhD Milestones [here](#).

Student Staff Partnership and Supervisor Responsibilities

Your most important academic contact in the Department is your supervisor(s), who is normally appointed for the duration of your study for the PhD, MPhil or MA by Dissertation degree. Your supervisor(s) will advise you about all intellectual aspects of your research, including your research methods, your sources, and literature to be consulted. Any written work you do, including draft chapters of the thesis, will be read in the first instance by the supervisor(s).

The supervisor has overriding responsibility for the individual student, and their main responsibilities are as follows:

- Maintaining **regular face-to-face contact** with students **at least once a month** (bi-monthly for part-time students) until the thesis/dissertation has been submitted and, if this arises, during any referral period and corrections. In the case of distance learning students or if social distancing is in place due to COVID-19, supervisors must maintain regular contact with the student through electronic and/or other means such as Skype/Zoom.
- Maintaining regular contact with the student in order to **provide general guidance on the research project** as a whole and specific assistance on matters of detail; ensuring that the student prepares written work for discussion and criticism according to an agreed timetable.
- Familiarise themselves with the **University regulations for research degrees** and associated policies, the **Code of Practice**, and the departmental supervisory arrangements and conduct their supervision in line with the expectations set out in the above documents and as part of standard departmental practice. Provide guidance about the nature and standard of research

work expected, including advice on attaining that standard, together with advice on academic practice in the discipline, matters of research design, ethical issues, and appropriate health and safety issues. Supervisors should make it clear to each research student that it is possible for the research and writing up to be completed within the Standard/Minimum period and provide guidance on the appropriate volume of research work for the degree in question. They should also assist each research student in developing a clear timetable of work and emphasise the importance of keeping to it.

- Offering **individual support to the student** by helping them surmount disappointments, crises of confidence, etc.
- **Request written work** as appropriate and comment on such work within a reasonable time.
- Supervisors must encourage their students to read the **Academic Offences Policy**. Supervisors are encouraged to conduct formative exercises to run student's work through plagiarism detection software in their first term of study.
- Be **reasonably accessible to students** and advise them of any lengthy absences which will change the routine of monthly meetings. Keep each student well informed in advance about any prospective periods of leave and the planned supervisory arrangements during the leave.
- **Identify and record the student's training needs** at the beginning of their studies and review them on a regular basis and at least at every Supervisory Panel. Ensure that the student has opportunities to develop appropriate generic and research skills and that a record of course/workshop completion and attendance is kept.
- Keep a **record of dates of formal supervisions** with the student and of written work submitted, including the feedback and when it was provided, which can be produced later if necessary. In addition, when supervising a student with a Tier 4 visa provide monthly confirmation, via the appropriate proforma, of contact with the student.
- **Report on each student's progress to the Supervisory Panel** indicating what has been achieved, advising the Panel where they believe that the student is unlikely to reach the standard for the degree for which they are registered or where progress is slow, and ensure that the chair of the Panel forwards a report on the Panel to the Director of Graduate Studies in time for the next Research Students' Progress Board meeting.
- Warn and advise students in writing, with a copy to the Director of Graduate Studies, where **work is not of the appropriate standard** or is being produced too slowly, and of steps that might be taken to remedy the situation.
- **Liaising with the Director of Graduate Studies**, and reporting when necessary to grant-awarding bodies on the progress of students in receipt of awards.
- Ensure that students understand the requirements of the degree, provide **guidance on the examination process**, help students to prepare for the viva voce examination, and direct the student to appropriate training.
- The supervisor and Head of Department (or Director of Graduate Studies in their absence) are responsible for approving the proposed title for the thesis, which indicates that the thesis is

close to submission. The **Approval of Title Form** should be submitted to the Postgraduate Research Education Team at least **three months** prior to submission in order for the appointment of the examiners process to start.

- Nominate examiners for a candidate's thesis in **appropriate time and by the time the student submits their thesis**.
- The supervisor should not normally be present during the viva but is **encouraged to be in the Department on the day or accessible to the student online** to support the candidate at the conclusion of the viva. With the permission of the candidate and the examiners, the supervisor is permitted to be present when the examiners inform the candidate of the result of the viva.
- **Writing references.** Where appropriate, encourage students to think about their subsequent employment, and possible future career trajectories, and direct the student to suitable sources of training, advice and support.

A supervisor may recommend that their postgraduate researcher attend a particular taught course in the Department (or in another department). If a student wishes to attend such a course you must obtain the consent of your supervisor beforehand. You must also obtain the permission of the course tutor before the course begins and make yourself fully aware of the tutor's conditions of permission, especially of the level of participation the tutor requires. Any student may attend any lecture given in the University.

The supervisor and the postgraduate researcher will arrange a working timetable at the start of their relationship. The **norm is one meeting a month**, but meetings may be more frequent during the first months of your research, and again as the writing of the thesis nears completion.

Postgraduate Researcher Responsibilities

As a Postgraduate Research student, you have a responsibility to:

- Read the documentation provided, including the [regulations](#) for your degree, the [Code of Practice](#) and details of the departmental supervisory arrangements.
- Attend meetings with your supervisors and Supervisory Panels as arranged, and prepare adequately for them, notifying your supervisor in the event of unavoidable absence.
- Keep in regular contact with your supervisor. Students and supervisors are required to communicate, whether face-to-face, remotely or by electronic means, to engage in discussion/review of the student's work and progress at least once a month (and bi-monthly for part-time students).
- Provide updates on progress as outlined in the [Progress and Appeals Procedures for Research Degree Students](#)
- Carry out, as far as possible, the work agreed with your supervisor and submit written work as agreed so that you meet the required milestones.
- Familiarise yourself with the departmental [milestones](#) for your degree and the requirements for

your chosen thesis format. The milestones are designed to help you submit your thesis by the deadline and are used to assess your progress during your period of study. The milestones will be considered at the supervisory panel which takes place twice a year (or equivalent for part-time students). It's important that you review your milestones regularly to ensure you'll be ready to submit your thesis by the required date.

- Familiarise yourself with University and subject-specific guidelines on **ethical research**, including data protection matters, and with health and safety and intellectual property regulations and obtain ethical approval as appropriate.
- Familiarise yourself with the expectations and conventions regarding **academic referencing** other people's work.
- Attend any **research training** and generic skills courses as agreed with your supervisor.
- As requested, submit **reports on progress** to research supervisors, Supervisory Panels, and the departmental Research Students' Progress Board.
- Keep a record of your **personal progress**, including a copy of agreed training needs, courses that need to be attended and when they are attended. This may take the form of a logbook or research portfolio to be signed off by your supervisor.
- Inform the relevant supervisor promptly if there are any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect your work. Notify the Supervisory Panel/Research Students' Progress Board in writing of any **extenuating circumstances** that you believe have significantly affected your performance.
- Discuss any supervisory problems with your supervisor, Director of Graduate Studies or the Head of Department. Alternatively, if you feel unable to talk to a member of the departmental staff, please contact the [Postgraduate Research Education Team](#) to discuss the concerns. Any discussions will remain confidential if requested. Students may request a change of supervisor but should note that it may not always be possible for suitable alternative arrangements to be made.
- You must **present your thesis for examination** by the end of the final term of your standard period, or by the end of the prescribed completion period.
 - A request for an extension of up to **two weeks** to the submission deadline may be made. Requests must be made to the Postgraduate Research Education Team in advance of the deadline. If granted an extension, you will not be expected to register or pay the prescribed fee for that two-week period.
 - If you **fail to present your thesis for examination** by the deadline, you will be deemed to have withdrawn permanently from the University and from your research degree, unless you are permitted an exceptional further period of completion.
 - Extenuating circumstances that affect your ability to submit your thesis by the agreed deadline will be considered by the Dean on a case-by-case basis.
- Familiarise yourself with the guidelines on thesis submission and with the examination process, and ensure that you are **prepared for your viva**.

The academic year

The academic year uses a week numbering system that covers the 52 weeks of a calendar year, but corresponds to typical term dates. So, the start of the academic year is week 1, which is Welcome week.

Term	Week numbers
Autumn	2-11
Spring	16-25
Summer	30-39

You can view the University's week numbers with the equivalent dates in the week by week [calendar](#). The University's [key dates](#) include an overview of the start and end of each term and exam periods.

Periods of study

		<i>Students first registered between 2008-09 to 2017-18</i>		<i>Students first registered from 2018-19 onwards</i>	
		Minimum	Maximum	Standard	Completion
Research degree	Mode				
Masters by Dissertation (MA by dissertation)	FT	One year	Two years	One year	Up to 11 months
	PT	Two years	Three years	Two years	Up to 11 months
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)	FT	Two years	Three years	Two years	Up to 11 months
	PT	Four years	Five years	Four years	Up to 11 months
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	FT	Three years	Four years	Three years	Up to 11 months
	PT	Six years	Seven years	Six years	Up to 11 months

PhD, MPhil and MA by Dissertation submission requirements

Each copy of the thesis/dissertation should contain a summary or abstract not exceeding **300** words.

Word limits **include** quotations but **exclude** appendices, references and footnotes (as long as the latter does not contain substantive argument).

Criteria for Award of PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) (subject to passing viva voce examination)

Critical projects in Literature, Film, Journalism or Theatre Studies:

- A thesis of **80,000** words.

Specification of submission materials for PhD projects involving original creative input

PhD in Creative Writing (word lengths may vary depending on genre):

- A novel or collection of short stories (**30,000-100,000** words) **plus** critical commentary (**35-40,000** words)

- A collection of poems (**50-100** pages, the length of a standard collection of poetry, roughly **10,000-20,000** words) **plus** critical commentary (**35-40,000** words).

PhD in Film Studies (Creative Practice):

- An original screenplay or equivalent short screenplays (**80-120** pages, equivalent to **80-100+** minutes of screen time, roughly **30,000** words) **plus** critical commentary (**40,000** words)
- A full-length film or equivalent short films (**80-120** minutes screen time), sample screenplay excerpt (**10,000+** words), critical commentary (**30-40,000** words).

PhD in Theatre Studies (Playwriting):

- An original full-length play or equivalent short plays (**70-100** pages or **70-150** minutes playing time, **20-30,000** words) **plus** critical commentary (**40,000** words).

PhD in Theatre Studies:

- **Desk-based/critical PhD projects** in Theatre Studies require a submission that is up to **80,000** words in length.
- **Practice-as-Research (PaR)** projects in Theatre Studies require a critical commentary (**40,000** words) and **equivalent submission in practice**. Depending on the specific demands of the research project (to be negotiated with the PhD candidate's supervisor), the practical submission can take the form of a range of outputs; e.g. performances, recorded workshops, scripts etc.

If you are planning on submitting a creative thesis **significantly above the 80,000-word limit**, you must seek permission from the Dean for your total word count **before submitting your thesis**. Your thesis may not be accepted by the [Postgraduate Research Education Team](#) if you have not sought Dean permission.

Criteria for Award of Master of Philosophy (subject to passing viva voce examination)

Specification of submission materials for the MPhil (critical projects in Literature, Film, Journalism or Theatre Studies):

- A thesis of **50,000** words.

Practice-as-Research (PaR) projects require:

- a critical commentary (**25,000** words) and **equivalent submission in practice**. Depending on the specific demands of the research project (to be negotiated with the PhD candidate's supervisor), the practical submission can take the form of a range of outputs; e.g. performances, recorded workshops, scripts etc.

Criteria for Award of Masters by Dissertation (subject to passing viva voce examination)

Specification of submission materials for the MA by Dissertation (critical projects in Literature, Film or

Theatre Studies):

- A dissertation of **30,000** words.

Practice-as-Research (PaR) projects require:

- A **documentation of creative practice** together with a **10,000-20,000-word** critical commentary. The practical submission can take the form of a range of outputs; e.g. performances, recorded workshops, scripts etc.

Supervisory Panels

The Supervisory Panel and responsibilities

The Supervisory Panel is responsible for formally monitoring students' progress and reports to the Department's Research Students' Progress Board.

Departments set up a Supervisory Panel for every student being examined by thesis or dissertation only - whether registered for a PhD, MPhil, or MA by Dissertation.

The system of Supervisory Panels is designed to give you fresh perspectives on your work, and the benefit of the research experience of qualified staff other than your supervisor. It is also designed to guide you in keeping to the timetable of work agreed as well as to provide you with experience of defending your work.

At the meeting, which will last for around one hour, the panel will critically (but constructively) discuss your submission and ask questions about past and future work on the thesis. Panel meetings complement and should not replace or repeat normal supervision.

At each meeting in the year, the Panel will make a recommendation to the Research Students' Progress Board (RSPB) that you be allowed to continue, or that you be required to discontinue with your studies, or that you alter your status.

Supervisory Panel members

The Panel is composed of the supervisor(s) and one or two other members of academic staff. The latter are chosen on the basis of their competence to comment on the empirical or thematic substance of a student's work, or to comment on structural or procedural issues.

The Supervisory Panel should be chaired by a Panel member **who is not supervising the student** who will write up the Supervisory Panel report and circulate to all members to sign and verify. **It is the responsibility of the supervisor to nominate the members of the Supervisory Panel**, and for the Director of Graduate Studies to ratify the composition of the Panel.

During the final **six months** before submission of your thesis, no member of staff who is nominated as your internal examiner may sit on the Supervisory Panel, comment on drafts of the thesis or offer a

judgement as to the overall quality of the thesis.

Supervisory panel reports: progression and criteria

After each Panel meeting, the chair of the Supervisory Panel will be required to complete a short report which is considered by the Department's Research Students' Progress Board (RSPB). The report may make suggestions for improvement. The Panel will rate your progress on a scale from **1** (Excellent) to **5** (Unsatisfactory).

You **must** sign the Supervisory Panel report to show that you have read it and send it back to the [Senior Student Administrator](#) by the date given in the email sent to you. You have the opportunity to comment on the Panel report for the Research Students' Progress Board to consider.

All Supervisory Panel report forms up require comments to be entered under the following set of criteria:

- Record of supervisory contact and meetings since last Panel and supervisor's comments on current progress
- Report on discussion of submitted work (identifying strengths and weaknesses)
- Outline of the student's achievements and skills enhanced to date
- Outline of Milestones met for current year of study
- Recommendations for work before the next Panel
- A discussion of the extenuating circumstances presented to the Panel (if applicable)
- Confirmation and discussion of ethical approval (if applicable)

Additional criteria are, however, required at two stages of the candidate's progression:

(1) Confirmation of PhD Status (at the end of the first year of study)

Doctoral researchers will be registered for a Standard period (three years for full-time students; six years for part-time students) with an initial registration status as an MPhil/PhD student. Students are supervised as PhD students but PhD status will need to be confirmed at the end of their first year of study.

In the first year, towards the end of the third term of study (end of the second year for part-timers), the second Supervisory Panel of the year will be the **Confirmation Panel**. The Panel will review the evidence to confirm whether progress and work is at PhD level.

In order to decide whether to confirm PhD status, the Supervisory Panel will apply the following criteria:

For critical / theoretical PhDs

- The student has completed a review of the secondary literature in the field, established a

critical position in relation to it, and identified the major primary and secondary sources to be used.

- The student is advanced in examining secondary sources, has demonstrated this in a substantial draft chapter outlining the conceptual framework of the thesis, and has begun to examine primary sources.
- The student has adequately formulated the topic and produced a clear outline of the thesis, together with a plan of work for the remainder of the minimum period.
- The quality and quantity of work so far produced indicates the student has an original thesis that can be completed on time. The expectation is that the student has produced **15,000** words of quality research writing in total (material that has been submitted to the first Supervisory Panel can count as part of this total, as does other quality writing such as an annotated bibliography or literature review, transcribed interview or rewritten project proposal).

For PhDs with Creative Practice (Creative Writing; Film with Creative Practice; Theatre Studies and Playwriting)

- The student is advanced in examining and processing primary and secondary sources.
- The student demonstrates progress by providing a sample of the creative work (to be agreed with the supervisor). Consistent with the demands of critical or desk-based PhDs, creative practice submitted should be the equivalent of **15,000** words of material, or the equivalent combination of critical/creative work.
- The student further provides a draft chapter of the critical/analytical commentary.
- The quality and quantity of work so far produced indicates the student has an original thesis that can be completed on time. The expectation is that the student has produced up to one third of their overall thesis.

If a student does not meet the confirmation criteria at their summer term Panel, they will have to present their work at a further Panel to be held in August/September. If they are still unable to meet the criteria, they will be downgraded to MPhil status. The Confirmation Panel can make the following recommendations to the Research Students' Progress Board (RSPB):

- Confirm PhD status
- Defer the decision regarding PhD status to the next Panel (this deferral can only happen **once**). Another Supervisory Panel will be held before the start of the next academic year for the Research Students' Progress Board to make a final decision on a student's progress.
- Change status to MPhil
- Discontinuation

(2) At the end of the Standard Period (3 years full-time, 6 years part-time)

In order for a student to progress beyond the Standard Period into a Completion Period (if necessary) the Panel will be asked to answer three questions:

- Has a substantial portion of the thesis been written in draft and is it of a satisfactory quality? Has all research been completed?
- Confirmation of the anticipated submission date
- Confirmation that the student has a clear plan of work for the completion period in order to submit their thesis at the end of this period

Please note, the Supervisory Panel and the Research Students' Progress Board will only permit students to enter a completion period if they have completed all their milestones for their third year of study. This includes **completing all research**. Completion period will only be granted to students as a **writing up period**.

If students have not completed all their research, the Supervisory Panel and the Research Students' Progress Board will look to extend the students' Standard period instead (this would require students to pay a higher fee than completion period fees).

Confirmation of PhD status

When PhD status has been confirmed by the Research Students' Progress Board the student will be sent a letter from the Department signed by either the Head of Department or the Director of Graduate Studies indicating that their formal registration status has been changed to PhD instead of MPhil/PhD. The Standard Period will be unchanged. Students will continue to have two Supervisory Panels each year (and at least one for part-timers) and the full range of decisions regarding progress will remain open to the Panel.

This means that **confirmation is not a guarantee that a subsequent recommendation of downgrading or discontinuation could not be made if good progress did not continue.**

If the first Confirmation Panel does not recommend that a student's PhD status should be confirmed the student will continue as an MPhil/PhD student until a second Confirmation Panel is held before the start of the next academic year. If, however, a student accepts the assessment that their status be downgraded or discontinued, then this change will take place immediately. In such cases, the student **does not** have a right of appeal. A student who is downgraded to MPhil will have revised Minimum and Maximum dates.

If the decision regarding PhD status is deferred to a second Confirmation Panel, or a student decides not to accept the recommendation of the first Confirmation Panel of downgrading or discontinuation,

then a second Confirmation Panel will be held just before the start of the second year (beginning of the third year for part-timers).

If, following the second Confirmation Panel, PhD status is not confirmed, then the Panel will recommend to the Research Students' Progress Board either downgrading to MPhil or discontinuation. At this point, a student **has a right of appeal** against that decision. The Research Students' Progress Board's recommendation is made to the Deputy Dean of Postgraduate Research and Education (Faculty of Humanities).

Supervisory panel arrangements

Supervisory Panel meetings will be arranged directly by the Senior Student Administrator. A calendar invite will be sent to your **Essex email address** and the Panel members with a suggested date/time within the below specified weeks. Please respond to the calendar invite as promptly as possible so meetings can be arranged quickly and efficiently.

Timeline of the Supervisory Panel

A Supervisory Panel must formally meet with a full-time student **twice every year** including in the completion **and** referral period (in January and May/June in the first year, and thereafter normally in November/December and May/June), and with a part-time student **at least once a year** (normally in May/June) including in the completion **and** referral period.

For the 2020/21 academic year, supervisory panels will be held in the following weeks:

WEEKS	DATES	STUDENTS DUE TO ATTEND A PANEL
8 and 9	23rd November – 4th December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All full-time students (except students starting in October 2020). Students who are due to submit OR resubmit by January 2021 Students whose completion period OR extension to maximum period ends in January 2021 Students who are in their first term of completion period from October 2020 AND/OR are planning to submit their thesis/dissertation by January 2021
20 and 21	15th-26th February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All full-time students who started in October 2020. Students who are due to submit OR resubmit by April 2021 Students whose completion period OR extension to maximum period ends in April 2021 Students who are in their first term of completion period from January 2021 AND/OR are planning to submit their thesis/dissertation by April 2021

36, 37 and 38	7th-25th June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All full and part-time students including students who started in January 2021. • Students who are due to submit OR resubmit by October 2021 • Students whose completion period OR extension to maximum period ends in October 2021 • Students who are in their first term of completion period from April 2021 AND/OR are planning to submit their thesis/dissertation by October 2021
46 and 47	16th-27th August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who started in April 2021 • Students whose progress decision was deferred at the Summer Research Students' Progress Board.

Submission of work to the Supervisory Panel

For each Supervisory Panel, the postgraduate researcher is required to produce the following materials:

- A Research Progress report detailing progress made, training completed and any issues that have arisen with the student's research (one page) and an outline of thesis structure including estimated word counts (one page) (template will be sent in advance by email)
- A piece of written work or creative practice including bibliography and references (approximately 25 pages), the nature of which is decided upon by the supervisor in consultation with the researcher
- An updated CV (required for the first Supervisory Panel in the third year of your studies only) (where appropriate, or other appropriate evidence of career development)

For PhD **supervisory panels in the first year**, the papers submitted for either panel should consist of an updated Research Proposal and a Critical Literature Review in the form of annotated bibliography; and/or equivalent piece of initial creative/critical work scoping out the field accompanied by an initial outline of thesis which makes clear the postgraduate researcher's own position regarding the existing literature, and the approach you intend to use. Please see the relevant milestones for more information.

For the **second panel in the first year and panels in the second and third years**, a draft (or polished) chapter is an appropriate paper.

Deadlines to submit work to the Supervisory Panel

Please send your panel submission electronically to the [Senior Student Administrator](#) by email **attachment only** by the following deadlines:

WEEK	DEADLINE	STUDENTS DUE TO SUBMIT WORK
6	Monday 9th November 2020 by 12 noon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All full-time students (except students starting in October 2020). Students who are due to submit OR resubmit by January 2021 Students whose completion period OR extension to maximum period ends in January 2021 Students who are in their first term of completion period from October 2020 AND/OR are planning to submit their thesis/dissertation by January 2021
18	Monday 1st February 2021 by 12 noon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All full-time students who started in October 2020. Students who are due to submit OR resubmit by April 2021 Students whose completion period OR extension to maximum period ends in April 2021 Students who are in their first term of completion period from January 2021 AND/OR are planning to submit their thesis/dissertation by April 2021
34	Monday 24th May 2021 by 12 noon	<p>All full and part-time students including students who started in January 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who are due to submit OR resubmit by October 2021 Students whose completion period OR extension to maximum period ends in October 2021 Students who are in their first term of completion period from April 2021 AND/OR are planning to submit their thesis by October 2021
45	Monday 9th August 2021 by 12 noon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who started in April 2021 Students whose progress decision was deferred at the Summer Research Students' Progress Board.

The Senior Student Administrator will circulate your submission to the Panel members ahead of the Supervisory Panel meeting.

Extenuating Circumstances

Extenuating circumstances are circumstances beyond your control which cause you to perform less well during your studies than you might have expected or to miss a milestone. In general, valid extenuating circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature that affect you for any significant period of time.

Your department will review your claim at your Supervisory Panel and RSPB and determine an appropriate course of action to take into account your extenuating circumstances, if appropriate.

If you do need to make an extenuating circumstances claim, you should first read the guidance very carefully and seek advice from [SU Advice](#) or the [Student Services Hub](#). Please be prepared that you

may need to include supporting evidence with your claim. Extenuating circumstance claims must be submitted to the Senior Student Administrator at the same time as your supervisory panel submission. It cannot be guaranteed that forms submitted after this date will be referred to the Panel/RSPB. You should also ensure that you record at least a brief summary of your extenuating circumstances on your Supervisory Panel progress report form.

You will need to indicate on the form whether you give permission for all decision-making staff (i.e. your Supervisory Panel, the Research Students' Progress Board, the PGRE Team and the Deputy Dean) to have access to the form and evidence.

Research Students' Progress Boards (RSPB)

The Research Students' Progress Board formally monitors the progress of **all** research students three/four times a year, on the basis of the first and second (and third if applicable) annual reports of the Supervisory Panel.

The Research Students' Progress Board is therefore equivalent to an exam board as held for undergraduate or postgraduate taught (MA) students.

The Research Students' Progress Board will provisionally meet in the 2020/21 academic year on the following dates:

- 16th December 2020

- 10th March 2021
- 7th July 2021
- 1st September 2021

You will have the opportunity to comment on the reports of the Panel in writing for the Research Students' Progress Board to consider.

The Research Students' Progress Board is chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies and includes the Head of Department, the Director of Research and other senior academic members of staff. Each students' Panel report and the recommendation from the Supervisory Panel will be considered at each meeting.

It is important to note that the Research Students' Progress Board can overturn the recommendation from the Supervisory Panel if they feel that they disagree with the outcome that the Panel has recommended.

The final recommendation regarding your progress lies with the Research Students' Progress Board.

You will be informed of the Research Students' Progress Board's decision regarding your progress by the **Senior Student Administrator** and/or the **Postgraduate Research Education Team** (depending on the decision made) in writing after each Research Students' Progress Board meeting has been held.

If a Supervisory Panel report has recommended that you discontinue or that your status be changed, you will be given the opportunity to attend the meeting of the Research Students' Progress Board reviewing the case. If the Research Students' Progress Board decides to accept such a recommendation, you will be informed in writing and you may request a review at which point the University's Guidelines for Supervisory Arrangements for Research Students come into operation and the Deputy Dean of Postgraduate Research Education (Faculty of Humanities) will set up a Review Committee.

Graduate Teaching Assistant opportunities

From their second year of research, PhD students are eligible to apply to become a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) in the Department, depending on available opportunities. As a GTA, you would be able to teach first year, or exceptionally second year, undergraduate modules and be mentored and supported in your teaching by our academic staff.

Depending on the availability of suitable opportunities, details of the application process and dates of interview for the GTA role will usually be advertised in the Spring or Summer term prior to the academic year in which you will be teaching.

Please note that GTA positions, if available, are very competitive. Always consult your supervisor first about your ambition to apply for teaching as they would be able to evaluate what impact an engagement

with teaching might have on your research.

If you have been offered an opportunity to teach, you are required to obtain the CADENZA certificate in your first year of teaching and attend the University's two-day induction event for new GTAs and any other courses and/or workshops as appropriate.

Submission of thesis/dissertation

Notice of Intention to Submit (Approval of Thesis Title form)

You must submit your Approval of Thesis Title form to the Postgraduate Research Education Team **AT LEAST three months** before you are intending to submit your thesis for examination.

Please discuss your final title with your supervisor as once the form has been submitted, it **cannot** be changed once approval has been given.

You can obtain the form from the [Senior Student Administrator](#) or online [here](#). The form will need to be signed by the student and the supervisor and approved by the Head of Department or Director of Graduate Studies.

The Postgraduate Research Education (PGRE) Team will contact students directly with confirmation of the approval of the title. The PGRE Team will also send students a **RD1 form** which they will need to complete and submit with their thesis.

Format of the thesis/dissertation

The agreed Departmental standard order of the thesis/dissertation is as follows:

- Title / Submission page
- **Abstract** (up to 300 words one page in length, double spaced, no pagination)
- **Table of Contents** (includes all page references to sections, chapters, and appendices that follow - note that sub-headed sections within chapters do not need to be listed on the table of contents - this is optional)
- **List of Figures / Illustrations** (if included, can be page numbered as roman numeral i, ii, etc.)
- **Acknowledgements** (if included, these can be numbered in roman numerals as ii, iii, iv, etc.)
- Page number 1 starts on the first page of the Introduction.
- **Bibliography**
- **Appendices** (if applicable)

Submitting the thesis/dissertation for examination

All candidates for a Masters by Dissertation (MAD or MSD), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) must submit an electronic copy of their thesis for examination.

The electronic copy should take the format of one PDF document containing all chapters, references and appendices.

All registration fees and debts must be paid before the thesis can be accepted for submission.

You should submit the following as attachments via email to pgrsubmission@essex.ac.uk:

- a) A single PDF copy of your entire thesis; and
- b) A submission form (RD1) completed and signed by yourself.

Submitting the thesis/dissertation to the Repository

Following the completion of the examination process, the candidate will be notified via email that in order to gain their award they must submit one electronic version of their thesis to the online [Research Repository](#). Following the receipt of this deposit, the candidate will be awarded their postgraduate research degree.

Thesis/dissertation embargos

Your thesis will be made open access when deposited in the online Research Repository. Students wishing to [place a restriction or embargo](#) on their thesis must do so via the [Approval of Title \(intention to submit\) form](#) prior to the submission of their thesis for examination.

When depositing your thesis in the [online Repository](#) you will be required to read and accept the conditions stipulated in the Thesis Deposit Agreement. The Thesis Deposit Agreement outlines the availability of the thesis and how it will be stored in the Repository.

The Viva Voce Examination

The standard period between submitting your thesis/dissertation and your viva voce examination is normally around **three/four months**. The timeline may vary if examiners have not been appointed in the appropriate time by your supervisor and approved by the Deputy Dean.

Requirements for the Award

A thesis/dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor/Master of Philosophy or Masters by Dissertation must embody the results of research carried out during the approved period of study. In the thesis/dissertation and the viva the candidate is required to conduct and present original investigations that make a significant contribution to knowledge, to test ideas, whether the candidate's own or those of others, to understand the relationship of the theme of the investigations to a wider field of knowledge and to express themselves clearly and concisely.

In the case of a thesis/dissertation involving **original creative output**, the thesis/dissertation must embody the results of research carried out and/or output created during the approved period of study. The thesis/dissertation must contain a commentary that addresses the originality and artistic relevance of the work. Within the thesis/dissertation and viva the candidate must show evidence of the originality of the work, demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of the theme of the thesis/dissertation to a wider field of knowledge, make a significant contribution to knowledge/the genre, and must express themselves clearly and concisely.

Viva voce examination membership and arrangements

The viva examination will be arranged **directly between the internal and external examiner** (and the Independent Chair if applicable). The Senior Student Administrator will inform you of the date/time of the viva examination as well in advance as possible.

Present at the viva examination will be the internal examiner (a member of staff at the University) and the external examiner. In some cases, an **Independent Chair** will also be present to oversee the running of the examination and make sure it adheres to University policy. The Independent Chair will not be involved in the decision of your viva outcome. You will be informed in advance whether an Independent Chair has been appointed for the examination.

Your supervisor will not normally be present during your viva examination and will not normally have any contact with your examiners other than to arrange their appointment.

The examination will normally take place in the Department's Meeting Room (5NW.6.18), in the internal examiner's office or via **Zoom** depending on current guidelines in relation to COVID-19. The length of a viva will vary but is usually two to four hours long.

You are advised to re-read your thesis/dissertation and anticipate possible areas of questioning. You should have a copy of your thesis/dissertation to hand during the viva. You are advised to consult your supervisor on how best to prepare for the viva, who may arrange a mock examination.

Examiners' recommendations

Examiners may recommend one of the following viva outcomes on academic grounds: A, B, C, D, E, F, G or H. Lower award: Masters by Dissertation. When the original examination was for a PhD and the candidate was referred for an MPhil there is no lower award.

The outcomes available for each degree, and any lower award, are specified in the programme requirements below. The outcomes are:

- (a) **Pass with no corrections.**

- (b) **Pass subject to minor typographical/presentational corrections.** The candidate makes any corrections prior to submission of the final version of the thesis.
- (c) **Pass subject to minor corrections to be made within three months.** The examiners must provide a separate list of corrections that they wish to see made. Minor corrections should not require the candidate to conduct further research or undertake substantial further work. These include typographical errors, clarifying points, rephrasing, editing/adding paragraphs, correcting references, etc. The internal examiner must confirm in writing that these have been made satisfactorily. Corrections must be made and the thesis submitted within three months.
- (d) **Pass subject to major corrections to be made within six months.** The examiners must provide a separate list of corrections that they wish to see made. Major corrections require the candidate to undertake substantial further work but the corrected thesis should not require re-examination. Such major corrections include more extensive editorial revisions, the addition of substantial new material, re-writing of substantial parts of the thesis, re-analysis of existing data, etc. The internal examiner must confirm in writing that these have been made satisfactorily. Corrections must be made and the thesis submitted within six months.
- (e) **Referral for re-examination in up to 12 months.** The candidate has not met the requirements for the degree examined but may resubmit, on one occasion only, a revised thesis for re-examination within 12 months. The examiners must provide a separate statement describing the shortcomings of the thesis and the changes required. These may include, amongst other things, editorial corrections and revisions, rewriting a part, parts or the whole of the thesis, the carrying out of further research and/or experimental work. They must also specify the referral period, which should not normally be less than six months or exceed 12 months.

For viva outcomes (f) to (i) (below) the candidate is awarded a degree at a lower level from the qualification for which they were initially assessed (for example awarding an MPhil to a PhD candidate). In such cases, the examiners must clearly provide in their statement how the candidate has met the criteria for the lower award in addition to the reasons for not meeting the criteria for the higher award.

- (f) **Award of a (lower award) with no corrections**
- (g) **Award of a (lower award) subject to minor typographical/presentational corrections.** The candidate makes any corrections prior to submission of the final version of the thesis.
- (h) **Award of a (lower award) with minor corrections to be made within three months.** The candidate has not met the requirements for the degree examined but has met the requirements for the (lower award) subject to the approval of minor corrections. The examiners must provide a list of the corrections that they wish to see made. Minor corrections should not require the candidate to conduct further research or undertake substantial further work. These include typographical errors, clarifying points, rephrasing, editing/adding paragraphs, correcting references, etc. The internal examiner must confirm in writing these have been made satisfactorily. Corrections must be made and the thesis submitted within three months.
- (i) **Award of a (lower award) with major corrections to be made within six months.** The candidate has not met the requirements for the degree examined but has met the requirements for the (lower

award) subject to the approval of major corrections. The examiners must provide a list of the corrections that they wish to see made. Major corrections require the candidate to undertake substantial further work but the corrected thesis should not require re-examination. Such major corrections include more extensive editorial revisions, the addition of substantial new material, re-writing of substantial parts of the thesis, re-analysis of existing data, etc. and the internal examiner must confirm in writing that these have been made satisfactorily. Revisions must be made and thesis submitted within six months.

- (j) **Referral for a (lower award).** The candidate has not met the requirements for the degree examined but may resubmit a revised thesis for re-examination for a (lower award). The examiners must provide a statement describing the shortcomings of the thesis and the changes required. These may include, amongst other things, editorial corrections and revisions, rewriting a part, parts or the whole of the thesis, the carrying out of further research and/or experimental work. They must also specify the referral period, which should not normally be less than six months or exceed 12 months.
- (k) **Fail.** The examiners must provide a clear statement describing the shortcomings of the thesis.

Publication of viva result

Students will be officially notified of the result of the viva by the Postgraduate Research Education Team normally within **one month**.

Students are permitted to request copies of the examiners' pre-viva reports when examining has been completed.

Appeals

PGR students wishing to [appeal](#) against either a progress decision (a recommendation made by the Research Students' Progress Board (RSPB)) or an examination decision (an outcome decided upon by the examiners following a viva voce) should follow the [Appeals Procedure](#).

Making changes to your study

If you feel as though your research has changed direction and that it would be appropriate to change your degree title, please discuss this with your supervisor, as they'll be best placed to advise on the most suitable option. You may also feel it appropriate to change to a differing degree type (from PhD to MSD for example), again please discuss this with your supervisor in the first instance.

Once you have decided that you want to change your degree title, you will need to make a formal request using the online [Change of Course/Degree title form](#).

Until your final term, you may request **a transfer from one mode of study** to another, for example from full-time to part-time, including distance learning, or vice-versa. You should discuss any proposed change with your supervisor. You can also change back from part-time to full-time for example within your standard period and until your final term of study.

If you are a **sponsored student**, you should discuss any proposed change with your funding body and/or check its terms and conditions. If you are a UK Research and Innovation funded or CHASE student, you should contact the Postgraduate Research Education team to discuss your request to change your mode of study.

Once you have decided you want to change your mode of study, you will need to make a formal request, using the online [Change of Mode of Study form](#), which will need to be approved by your department and the Dean.

If your request is approved your period of study will be adjusted pro-rata.

Thinking of leaving or taking a break (intermitting)?

You may experience doubts at some point during your studies. If you're thinking about leaving Essex, we're here to support you and give you the advice you need to help you make an informed choice. You can contact your department, supervisor or Student Services Hub to speak in confidence about your concerns, and also the [different options available to you](#) and the impact they may have.

Library Services

The library provides access to an extensive digital library of books and journals to support your research. As well as a team of specialist Academic Liaison Librarians who can advise on appropriate resources for your area, there is also a Scholarly Communications and Research Support team, who can advise on a variety of topics including open access and how/where to publish your work. Online support in these areas can be found in the [Library's Research Support guide](#). A range of workshops and training sessions are also held throughout the year through [Newcomers](#), a collaborative network run by Library Services, the Research Enterprise Office, and the UK Data Archive that aims to support researchers, and offer training across the research lifecycle.

At our Colchester Campus, the **Albert Sloman Library** on Square 5 is open for long hours and has a variety of study spaces, including a dedicated Postgraduate Study Room. The Library offers a dedicated Helpdesk, live chat and the opportunity to book appointments with specialist staff to help you through your studies and beyond.

See the [Library website](#) for the latest information on all our libraries and the services available, including opening hours.

Assessment and Academic Integrity

Undertaking a research degree varies for each person. Some are predominantly lab based, others require significant library research, and some must undertake taught modules. All schools and departments at the University employ a variety of assessment methods, and these will be tailored based on your research area and the course you're on.

Ethics in research

All research involving human participants, whether undertaken by the University's staff or students, **must** undergo an ethics review **by an appropriate body** and ethical approval **must** be obtained before it commences. You can find our Guidelines for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants [here](#). The online Ethical Approval application form can be found [here](#).

You must obtain ethical approval before conducting any research with human participants (such as interviews, filming, workshops, questionnaires etc.). Research conducted without ethical approval **will not** be able to be used in your thesis/dissertation.

'Human participants' are defined as including living human beings, human beings who have recently died (cadavers, human remains and body parts), embryos and foetuses, human tissue and bodily fluids, and personal data and records (such as, but not restricted to medical, genetic, financial, personnel, criminal or administrative records and test results including scholastic achievements). **Research involving the NHS and research involving human tissue or adults lacking capacity to consent will require Health Research Authority approval.**

Please contact the [Department's Ethics Officer](#) for any queries regarding ethics and ethical approval.

Risk assessments in research

If the research you are undertaking could potentially harm participants, researchers or the university (e.g. risks to physical or mental health, safeguarding or reputational, legal or financial risks) you will need to carry out a risk assessment, which you may be asked to provide as part of the ethics approval process. Your academic supervisor will be able to advise you on this.

You will also find information about risk assessment and managing health and safety risks on the student directory or email our [health and safety team](#) for advice or to book onto [Research Risk Assessment training](#).

If you are planning to carry out research abroad it is important that you research your destination, so that you are aware of security, safety or culture issues that may affect you or your research.

The University has comprehensive travel insurance, which you will be able to arrange by completing the online Travel Insurance Application Form.

You will find information about overseas travel and travel insurance on the [Student Directory](#).

Academic Integrity and Academic Offences

The University expects students to complete all assessment with honesty and integrity and to follow our [conventions for academic writing](#) (including appropriate referencing of sources) and ethical considerations. If you don't meet these expectations, then you may be charged with having committed an [academic offence](#), a matter the University takes very seriously.

It is your responsibility to make yourself aware of the regulations governing examinations and how to correctly prepare your thesis/dissertation. An academic offence can take place even if you didn't mean to commit one, and examples include plagiarism, falsifying data or evidence, and communicating with another candidate in an examination.

Referencing

Respecting authorship through good academic practice is one of the key values of higher education in the UK. Referencing is how you acknowledge all sources used within a piece of work. You must reference all work used whether cited directly (quotes), or indirectly (paraphrasing and summarising).

Referencing allows you to give credit to other's ideas, work, research, theories, concepts, outcomes and results, and demonstrates your breadth of reading and knowledge on a subject. If you do not reference properly, this could amount to [plagiarism](#), which is an [academic offence](#).

There are styles of referencing which will determine exactly how you format your reference. Your departmental referencing style is **Chicago**. You must use this referencing style. Guidance on your referencing style is available [online](#), including an interactive referencing tutorial. You can also take the [Academic Integrity course](#) on Moodle.

Information on the Department Style Guide is added as an appendix to this Handbook and can also be found on Moodle via the Information for Current Students page as well as the Library website.

Academic Skills and Support

Every student arrives at Essex with the same spirit of determination but different experiences of education and levels of academic readiness. Skills for Success can help you identify your talents and strengthen those areas you need to develop.

We are committed to ensuring that every student is able to get the most out of their academic study and achieve their potential on their course, which is why the [Skills for Success team](#) is available to help by providing support, resources and workshops on:

- [Academic writing](#)
- [Maths and stats](#)
- [Digital Skills](#)
- [Research](#) and [referencing](#)

- [English language](#)
- [Exam revision](#)

The Skills for Success team can also provide further [learning and study skills information and support](#) for disabled students.

Royal Literary Fund Fellow

The Royal Literary Fund exists to help writers, and champion good writing. It provides a resident fellow, here at Essex, to help our students with the writing of their essays, dissertations, theses, or even job and grant applications.

This year, the fellow is **Louise Millar**, a published novelist and editor. If you would like to take up Louise's advice, please book your slot in by emailing lifstt@essex.ac.uk for available appointments. The service is entirely free, confidential and independent of the University.

Proofreading services

Before considering the use of proofreading services, all students should first discuss their work with their supervisor(s). Many students seek 'proofreading' services at some point during their studies, but different types of editing can occur under this name which may not be appropriate in an academic context where work is assessed and could potentially qualify as an [academic offence](#). The University is keen to ensure as far as possible that students understand what [proofreading work should entail](#) and the acceptable boundaries to which any proofreading or editing must adhere to.

The University maintains a list of [local freelance proofreaders](#) who offer services to students and staff at Essex that have read and agreed to abide by the [University's policy and guidance on proofreading](#).

Language classes

English classes for dependants

The [Department of Language and Linguistics](#) offers dependants of international students and staff at the chance to improve their English language, through our [ECDIS](#) programme, at no extra cost. Classes are taught at the Colchester Campus at three basic levels: Elementary (A1/A2), Intermediate (B1/B2) and Advanced (C1/C2) and will focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Learning a Language

Learn a language at Essex to increase your global and cultural awareness. Language learning can give you the confidence to work and travel internationally, expand your options for studying abroad, and get a competitive edge when you're looking for a job. There are a number of ways to do it, so [look online](#) to discover the best option for you.

Computers, Learning Technologies and your Information

Computers

Using a campus computer

If you [need to use a computer on campus](#) our computer labs are the perfect place to study or work. We also have group study pods which are ideal for group projects. Many labs stay open until late and some are open 24/7. Labs may be booked for teaching, and so it is best to check availability first.

IT Help and Guidance

You can search the [Student Directory](#) for more IT information, including [software available](#) to students, how-to guides, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to video screencasts.

If you can't find what you're looking for, or if you need to talk to someone, then the [IT Helpdesk team](#) are here to assist you further.

Your information

Changes to your information

During your period of study at Essex, you may wish to be known by a preferred name or update your legal name on our student record database (ESIS) if your circumstances change. It is important you keep your information up to date, which you can [manage and update online](#).

Your personal information

We collect and hold lots of information about you, your course, and your progress so that we know who you are, what you're doing, and how you are getting on. This means we can support you and also improve our services to reflect the need of our students.

All information about you is kept securely, and access to your information is only given to staff who need it in order to do their job. Where possible, we will ask you for your permission to share.

You have a [right to ask for copies of information](#) we hold about you. To find out more about what information we collect, what we do with it, who gets to see it, and your rights under the data Protection Act 2018, read our [Privacy Notice for students](#).

Student Voice

At the University of Essex, the views, ideas and feedback of our students are at the heart of what the University does. The time students take to offer feedback is hugely appreciated and this feedback, both positive and developmental, is used to help make short and longer-term improvements, both to the experience of current students, but also for Essex students of the future. You can do this in a number of ways at Essex through your [Student Voice](#).

Student Representatives

You can contact or volunteer to be a [student representative](#) who represent the voice of fellow students in departmental Student Voice Groups (SVG) and other University level committees.

PGR Course Representatives are a vital point of contact for a diverse and discerning postgraduate population. As an PGR Course representative, you will be expected to use a range of communication techniques to solicit feedback and queries from your fellow students, actively locating the voices that are under-represented, and to have the judgement to discriminate which issues need to be escalated to the Student Voice Groups, and which can be solved by more light-touch methods. You must excel in diplomacy, and know the importance of discretion, but still be prepared to take a stand on issues that matter to the student body – sometimes representing opinions counter to your own. You need to make sure that you have the time and inclination for a public-facing role whilst undertaking a demanding programme of studies.

For more information in becoming a PGR Course Representative, please contact the [Director of Graduate Studies](#).

Student Voice Groups

[Student Voice Groups](#) (SVGs) are made up of [student representatives](#) and members of staff. SVGs typically meet once per term and provide an accessible arena for students to discuss with staff issues connected to teaching, learning and student support. They also provide an opportunity for the department or school to consult with students and receive feedback on new proposals.

Student Surveys

[Student satisfaction surveys](#) enable the University to gauge overall satisfaction amongst students. When the results have been reviewed and analysed, the University can then enhance your experience of learning at Essex.

A new PGR Student Voice Survey will be launching in 2021, designed by students for students, details of which will be emailed to all students nearer the time.

You Matter

We know university life can throw up all kinds of concerns and questions. Everyone has [mental health](#) – sometimes your mental health may be good, other times it may be not so good. It could be stress related to deadlines, general worries or concerns about friends and family members. Whatever is worrying you, if you need some information, advice or support, the University offer a wide range of services and support to help you.

Student Services Hub

If you need practical advice, a confidential conversation, or general information and guidance on University life, no matter what the issue is, the [Student Services Hub](#) is the place to go. You can find out about health and wellbeing, accommodation, careers services, money matters and much more. Your questions matter and you'll get answers from our team of experts.

To Contact the Student Services Hub please use this link to access our web pages and talk to us on Live Chat: [Ask the Hub](#)

Support for disabilities and conditions

We encourage all new students with a disability, long term medical condition, specific learning difficulty or mental health difficulty to disclose and register with the [Student Services Hub](#) so that we can plan how best to [support you in your studies](#).

Funding opportunities

UK students may be eligible for a [Disabled Students' Allowance grant](#). If you are not a UK student, you may be eligible for [other grants and funding](#). We would recommend you [contacting the Student Services Hub](#) to discuss all the options that may be available to you, as well as for general advice, support and information on health and wellbeing issues.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP)

If you have a permanent or temporary disability that may mean you have difficulty in evacuating one or more areas, you can arrange for a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan \(PEEP\)](#).

Seeing a Doctor

If you're studying on a course for more than six months, you're required to register with a local doctor. Our Colchester Campus has its own [health centre](#) or you can use the [NHS Choices postcode](#) finder to find your nearest doctor. If you require emergency medical or mental health services, there are a [number of options available](#) both through the NHS and also the University, regardless which campus you are studying at.

Counselling services

Our University offers a wide [range of services and resources](#) to support all of our students with a variety of counselling opportunities.

If you feel you would benefit from support, including counselling, please contact your Student Services Hub where you can find more information, including the full range of counselling services available to you.

UK Immigration Advice and Guidance

[Immigration advice and guidance](#) is regulated in the UK by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) and can only be given by those that are authorised to do so. We publish lots of information and guidance on our website for students and you can contact one of our authorised advice services via the 'ask us a question section' for further advice about the UK's student immigration rules.

Money management

If you get into financial difficulty you should get help and talk to someone as soon as possible. The sooner your problem is identified, the sooner it can be solved. You may be eligible to apply for financial support to assist you with short-term unexpected and unforeseen costs. Advisers in our [Student Services Hub](#) and our independent [Students' Union Advice](#) can listen and talk you through the issues you are experiencing.

Students' Union Advice

Our [SU Advice](#) service also offers free, confidential, independent and impartial advice on many issues that might be affecting you. Our friendly, trained staff are on hand to support you throughout your time at Essex. You can speak to us about Academic processes and procedures, representation at University meetings, Tier 4 UK visa extensions, housing, complaints, welfare and consumer issues.

Colchester students – suadvice@essex.ac.uk; 01206 874034

Residence Life

Our [Residence Life team](#) is here to help you settle in and support you during your time living on campus. Each residents' assistant (RA) is assigned an area and will aim to get to know you and organise a range of social activities. Plus, they can help if you've got any concerns or complaints. Residence Life operates outside of office hours when other University support services are closed.

Religion, faith and beliefs

We're proud of our vibrant and diverse [multicultural community](#) and welcome everyone, of all faiths and none. The calm, friendly and supportive atmosphere in our Faith Centre is a welcoming place for staff, students and the wider community to meet, interact and engage with each other.

Harassment support

We are Essex. We pride ourselves on being a [welcoming and inclusive student community](#). We offer a wide [range of support](#) to individuals and groups of student members who may have specific requirements, interests or responsibilities – to help you fulfil your potential.

We encourage a culture of dignity and respect. We're committed to upholding an environment that's free from any form of harassment or bullying. Though rare, these incidents can occur and if they do our [Harassment Report and Support Service](#) of trained Harassment Support Workers are on hand to help.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

The health and wellbeing of our students is our priority. This means we are constantly monitoring advice from the UK Government, Public Health England, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the World Health Organisation, and updating our guidance for students in line with their advice.

Our [guidance to students on protecting yourself and others from COVID-19](#) is updated regularly. It is advisable to check the page frequently to be sure you are up to date with the latest guidance and information from the University.

Health and safety on campus

Our campuses are generally very [safe environments](#). We want to ensure that things stay this way. In order to achieve this, we work closely with local agencies including the police and borough councils. Take a look at our website for [general information and advice](#).

Please familiarise yourself with [fire safety and emergency evacuation procedures](#) for your accommodation, work or study location. If you have a permanent or temporary disability that may mean you have difficulty in evacuating one or more areas, you can arrange for a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan \(PEEP\)](#).

Please take note of our [advice on the safe use of electrical items and prohibited electrical items](#) in residential and non-residential areas.

All students residing on campus should complete the Moodle [Fire Safety Course for Residents training](#).

If you have any health and safety concerns or need to report an incident, please use the [University's reporting service](#) to notify us.

Making a Complaint

The University is a large community engaged in many activities of both an academic and non-academic nature. From time to time, you may feel dissatisfied with some aspect of your dealings with the University

and, when that happens, it is important that the issue is dealt with constructively and as quickly as possible without risk of disadvantage or recrimination.

The University aims to resolve complaints quickly and informally in accordance with the [Student concerns and complaints procedure](#) which can be found on our website.

Student Development

Careers Services

The Career Services team offer a programme of information, advice, guidance and support through various events, workshops and one- to- one sessions. We also have teams dedicated to Work Based Learning, Placements and Internships that can provide information and support as needed. Find out more about the [Career Services available to you](#).

CareerHub

Find hundreds of part-time jobs, internships and graduate vacancies, book on to careers events and workshops, take career assessments, practice your interview skills, build your CV, and connect with employers on [CareerHub](#), the online Essex careers and jobs portal. Login with your Essex username and password.

Big Essex Award

The Big Essex Award is a way to get recognition for the extra-curricular and voluntary activities that you complete during your time at Essex, both on and off campus. All verified activities will be included on your university transcript, the Further Achievement Report (FAR). Postgraduate students can use [GradIntelligence](#) to record any extra-curricular activities you may be involved in through the Big Essex Award.

Volunteering

Join the vTeam and be the difference. There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer during your time at Essex. The [vTeam](#), run by the Students Union, is a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, make friends, give something to the local community, and gain valuable skills.

Essex Interns

Essex interns create paid internships exclusively for you as an Essex student. They're flexible too; part time during term time or full time in vacations. Sign up for [Essex Interns](#) to kick-start your career.

You Are Essex

Your Award Certificate

Upon graduating from your studies, you will receive a [degree certificate](#) and a copy of your academic transcript. You will also be invited to attend the next Graduation ceremony available to you.

Graduation

The culmination of all your hard work, [Graduation](#) ceremonies take place at our Colchester Campus each July in the Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall. All eligible students studying at our Colchester, Loughton and Southend Campuses will be invited to attend.

Students with exam boards held in Autumn term will be invited to attend our Winter Graduation ceremony where these are held; students with exam boards held in Spring or Summer term will be invited to attend our Summer Graduation ceremony.

GradIntelligence

If you studied an undergraduate degree with us at Essex, you would have had access to your [Higher Education Achievement Report \(HEAR\)](#) record which would also show any awards or additional achievements you have received formal recognition for. However, this is currently only available for undergraduate awards; postgraduate students can instead use [GradIntel](#) to record any extra-curricular activities or achievements during your studies, such as the [Big Essex Award](#).

References

Requesting references from members of staff

If you require a personal reference, always ask permission from a member of staff before giving their name as a referee. You should consider from whom it is most appropriate to request a reference and who will be best equipped to evidence your character and performance in the subject.

For example, final year project supervisors, year organisers, and core course supervisors are likely to be more suitable than lecturers that have taught you on a first-year option course. Every reasonable effort will be made to meet a request for reference for a student who has undertaken study within our Department. Requests received from students who have graduated from the University within the last three years will be prioritised. Requests received outside of this period may, of course, be met if a member of staff is equipped with the necessary information and is willing to provide a reference.

It is always helpful if you can provide the member of staff with details about the course or job you have applied for and, if relevant, a CV or other summary of your qualifications and experience. Please try to ask for references in good time – it is not always possible for a member of staff to write a reference immediately.

Alumni

Essex is forever and although your time here will fly by, you'll be part of the Essex family for life. When you graduate, you'll get an alumni card and join a community of over 100,000 fellow graduates around the world. We'd love to keep in touch and invite you to our alumni events, networking and volunteering opportunities, as well as offer you special alumni benefits. Want to know more? Visit [our website!](#)

What comes next?

The world is your oyster! The options and opportunities open to you as a graduate can be overwhelming. You may know the exact path and next steps that you wish to take, or you might not, and this is okay. Our Careers Services can offer information, guidance and advice on your different options after graduation and you can return to Essex for these services at any time.

Spread your wings graduand; but you can always come back! You may decide to pursue further postgraduate research degrees in the Department. You can explore our [incredible range of courses](#) online.

Whatever you choose to do, please stay in touch! Keep us up to date with your achievements and explore the variety of ways through which you can give back to Essex too.

Appendix

Departmental Style Guide

The Departmental Style Guide should be used as the stylistic basis for all theses and dissertations submitted to the Department. It describes good practice in all the aspects of formatting, quotation, and referencing that you are likely to need to use, and adheres to widely recognised standards in scholarly writing. It is based upon the [Chicago style guide](#).

Please see the relevant Library page for information on Chicago, samples of footnotes and bibliography entries and a range of support resources for referencing:

<https://library.essex.ac.uk/referencing>

Cite them right

[Cite Them Right Online](#) is a comprehensive referencing resource. It will help you to cite and reference just about any source and to avoid plagiarism. The site also allows you to create your own references by copying the layout of a record; you can then email the example to yourself or cut and paste it into a document.